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yom your kippar

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"YOM KIPPUR" / Its Significance, Laws, and Prayers

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This volume is dedicated to the memory of my dear husband and our dear father

Leon Setton יהודה בן אסתר הכהן ע״ה

March 17, 1984 / י"ד אדר ב' תשמ"ד

Born on Yom Kippur, he lived up to the message of that day all his life.

At peace with his fellow Jews and a zealot in the cause of harmony, he was a worthy heir of Aaron, the first Kohen.

"Blessed is my Lord for every single day" – בּרוּך ה' יוֹם יוֹם – was his constant refrain.
Every day is a new gift, and we are challenged to use it well, as the Giver wished.
Leon Setton lived up to the challenge.

His memory inspires us to be worthy of his legacy.

Mrs. Claire Setton and family

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An Overview/

Yom Kippur — The Day and Its Essence*

דַרְשׁוּ ה׳ בַּהַמַּצְאוֹ קַרַאָהוּ בַּהַיוֹתוֹ קַרוב ... בַּיַחִיד אַימַת? אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר אַבוּהַ אַלוּ עַשַּׁרָה יַמִּים שַבּין ראש השנה ליום הכפורים.

Seek HASHEM when He is accessible, call Him when He is near (Isaiah 55:6) . . . When does this apply seven to an individual? Rabbah bar Avuhah said: These are the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Rosh Hashanah 18a).

I. Day of Repentance

possibility of repentance, the exist, because man stumbles more

A Without the possibility of repentance, the world could not exist, because — as our common Necessary experience makes all too clear — man stumbles more than he strides. If there were no possibility of wiping Without the the slate clean, man could have no hope of rising above his frequent sins. They would always remain to world could not condemn him, never allowing him to escape the inevitability of judgment and punishment. For this than he strides. reason, the concept of teshuvah [repentance] had to be created before the universe, for God would not create a world that was doomed from its inception (Nedarim 39b). But though the possibility of repentance always exists — must exist — it is uniquely acceptable during the ten days ending with Yom Kippur. During this period, God waits - anxiously and expectantly, as it were - for the Jewish people and the Jewish person to return to His embrace. He is more responsive at this time, He assists those groping for His closeness, and He regards our failure to respond to this opportunity as a transgression of uncommon magnitude.

^{*}The Overview is based primarily on Resisei Laylah, ch. 50

Sometimes a particular good important that it versa.

Relative Rambam (Hil. Teshuvah 3:1-3) writes that on Rosh Merit Hashanah everyone's deeds are weighed in the heavenly scales of judgment. Those with a preponderance of good deeds are inscribed for life; those with a deed is so preponderance of sins are inscribed for death. The key outweighs many factor in this is not the numbers of virtues or sins, but sins, and vice their relative worth. Sometimes a particular good deed is so important that it outweighs many sins, and vice versa. This explains many stories from Rabbinic literature where it is told that seemingly undistinguished people - or even some who were generally considered to be evil — were assigned to high places in God's order because of relatively few especially outstanding deeds.

Seldom do we know why people are deserving of good fortune and often we are troubled by the success of those whom we consider to be unworthy. But occasionally we understand. For example, we might be convinced that someone is totally undeserving — until we learn that, at great personal sacrifice, he had saved countless lives.

The same principle extends to the nation as a whole. The Chafetz Chaim would exhort his fellow lews to extend themselves to study Torah and fulfill the commandments, even though the quality of study and observance in his time had fallen precipitously from the standards of previous centuries. To the contrary, the Chofetz Chaim would say that loyalty to the Torah in his time mattered more than in earlier eras. In his time, poverty, persecution, the community dislocations caused by World War I, and the inroads of various secular ideologies had made it more difficult than ever to be a complete Jew. In such times, even imperfect imperfect mitzvos are of relatively great value before God, because they come at such great effort. Similarly, we correctly God, because they admire people of limited ability who strive mightily and effort, achieve the utmost of their potential, even though, in absolute terms, they are less accomplished than brilliant scholars who excel the crowd with a minimum of effort. In weighing people's deeds, God, too, measures many

In such times, even are of relatively great value before come at such great

factors, most of which are known only to Him in His ultimate wisdom.

A Time to But there is a third category of people facing the Repent judgment of Rosh Hashanah: Those who are evenly balanced between virtues and sins. Of such people Rambam (ibid) writes:

> והבינוני, תולין אתו עד יום הכפורים, אם עשה תשובה נחתם לחיים, ואם לאו נחתם למיתה. As for one who is evenly balanced [between good and bad deeds], his fate is suspended until Yom Kippur. If he repents, he is sealed for life, and if not he is sealed for death.

Failure to repent is condemn a sinner balanced between good and evil.

Rambam maintains that failure to repent is sufficient sufficient reason to reason to condemn a sinner who was otherwise who was otherwise balanced between good and evil, even though he has not increased his sins. But why? If someone fails to repent, he is still evenly balanced, and in such cases the Abundantly Merciful One tips the scales in favor of virtue (Rosh Hashanah 17a). If so, one's failure to repent should change nothing — the scales remain evenly balanced as they were, and God's mercy should decide the issue in favor of life.

> Lechem Mishnah explains that the failure to repent is in itself an additional transgression, because there is a constant commandment upon every Jew to repent at all times. Thus, if someone does not repent, by his very refusal to do so, he has wantonly tipped the scales against himself.

gift that enables

R' Yitzchok Blazer (Cochvei Or) takes the point The commandment further. The commandment to repent is no ordinary to repent is no ordinary commandment. It is a heavenly gift that enables man to commandment, erase the past, especially during the Ten Days of It is a heavenly Repentance, when God is near and awaits the opportuman to erase the nity to forgive His errant children. A refusal to repent at such a propitious time is not merely negligent, it is insulting. It is as if God Himself comes hat in hand hoping that the sinner will look up and say, "I am truly sorry, I will change. Please forgive me." Instead, he turns his back upon God and disdains the Heavenly

هه Background and Insights:

The Scriptural Verses

•§The special laws regarding Yom Kippur appear in the Torah in three separate passages.

☐ The first of these (*Leviticus* 16:1-34) appears in *parashas Acharei* and details the unique Temple Service of the day. This service is performed exclusively by the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest). Moreover, this passage, quite appropriately, is the Torah reading for *Shacharis* of Yom Kippur.

נִיְדַבֵּר הֹ׳ אֶל מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרִי מוֹת שְׁנִי בְּנֵי אֲהָרֹן בְּקָרְבָּחָם לְּפְנֵי ה׳ נַיְּמָתוּ. נִיֹאמֶר ה׳ אֶל מֹשֶׁה צַּחַרֹן אָחִיךְּ וְאַל יָבֹא בְּכָל עַת אֶל הַקְּרֶשׁ מְפִּית לַפְּרָכ, אָל פְּנִי הֻ הַבְּפּרָרת אֲשֶׁר עַל הָאֶרֹן וְלֹא יָמוֹּת כִּי בְּעָנֵן אַרָאָה עַל הַכָּפּרָת. בְּוֹאת יָבֹא אַהְרֹן הַבְּּל הַקְּרֶשׁ . . . וְהָיְתָה לֶּכֶם לְחָקֵת עוֹלֶם בַּחֹרְשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעָשׁוֹר לְחֹרֶשׁ הְּעָנוּ אָתְ הַבְּּע הַבְּּל מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׁוּ הָאָזֹרְח וְהַנֵּר הַנְּר בְּנִר בְּעוֹר שְׁבָּחוֹן הַיִּא לְכָם עַלִיכָם לְפְנֵי הִי תְּטְהָרוּ. שַּבְּת שַׁבְּחוֹן הֵיא לְכָם עַלִּיכָם לְפְנֵי הִי תְּטְהָרוּ. שַּבְּת שַׁבְּחוֹן הֵיא לְכָם וְעִנִּיְם אֶת נַבְּשְׁתִיכָם חְבָּל מְבָבְי הַקְּרְשׁ , וְכִבֶּּר אֶת מְקְדֵשׁ אֶת בְּגְּדִי הַקְּרְשׁ , וְכַבֶּר אֶת מְקְדֵשׁ הַקְרְשׁ , וְכַבֶּר הָתְל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת הַמִּוְבָם יְכַפֵּר וְעַל הַבָּר בִּנְדִי הַקְּרְשׁ, וְכִבֶּר אֶת מְקְדֵשׁ הַקְרְשׁ וְמָל מְל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת הַמִּוְבָּה יְכַפֵּר וְעַל הָבִּיִי וְשַל בָּל עַם הַקְּהָל יְבַפָּר. וְהָיְחָה וֹאַת לְכֶם לְחָבָּת עוֹלֶם לְּכַפֵּר עַל בְּנִי יִשְּרָאֵל מְבָּל הַטֹּאתָם אָחַת בַּשְּׁנָה וְיַבְּל בְּנִי יִשְׁרָאל מְבָּל הַטֹּאתָם אָחַת בְּשְׁנָה וְיִבְּל בְּנִי יִשְּרָאֵל מְבָּל הַטֹּאתָם אָחַת בְּשְׁנָה וֹיִבְּע בְּיִי יִשְּרָאל מְבָּל הַטֹּאתָם אָחַת בַּשְׁנָה וֹיִלְבָּה הֹי אָת מִשָּׁה. וִיִּבְּי הִיּבְרָב בְּיִבְּע בְּבְּבָּר הַיִּב בְּעָב בְּיִבְּעָם בְּבָּבְי הִיּבְּבְּי הִיּבְּע בְּבְּבָּי הִיּיִבְה הִי אָת משַׁה.

HASHEM spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they approached before Наsнем, and they died. And Наsнем said to Moses: Speak to Aaron, your brother - he may not come at all times into the Sanctuary within the curtain, in front of the cover that is upon the Ark, so that he should not die; for in a cloud will I appear upon the cover. Only with this may Aaron come into the Sanctuary . . . This shall remain for you an eternal decree: in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and not do any work, neither the citizen nor the alien who lives among you. For through this day he will atone for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before HASHEM you shall be cleansed. It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you when you are to afflict yourselves; it is an eternal decree. The Kohen, who has been anointed or who has been given the authority to serve in place of his father, shall bring atonement; he shall don linen vestments, the sacred vestments. He shall bring atonement upon the Holy of Holies; and upon the Tent of Meeting and the Altar shall he bring atonement; and upon the Kohanim and upon all the people of the congregation shall he bring atonement. This shall be to you an eternal decree to bring atonement upon the Children of Israel for all their sins once a year; and [Aaron] did as HASHEM commanded Moses.

☐ The second Torah passage (Leviticus 23:26-32) that speaks of Yom Kippur appears in the section of parashas Emor, that discusses the festivals. It contains the commandment of affliction, i.e., fasting, and prohibition against working. These verses make no mention of the Temple service.

Although this passage would seem the logical choice for the afternoon Torah reading of Yom Kippur, it is not. Presumably this is due to the brevity of the passage, seven verses, while the Torah reading requires a minimum of nine verses.

נְיָדְפַּר ה׳ אָל משָה לַאמר. אַרְּ בָּעְשוֹר לֵחַדֶשׁ הַשְּבִיעִי הַנָּה יוֹם הַכְּפָּרִים הוֹא מְקְרֵא קֹרֲשׁ יִהְיָה לָכָם וְעִנִּיתָם אָת נָפְשׁתַיכָם וְהַקְרַבְּתָּם אִשְׁה לַה׳. וְכָל מְלָאבָה מְקַרֵא קֹרֲשׁ יִהְיָה לָכָם וְעִנִּיתָם אָת נַפְשׁתַיכָם וְהַקְרַבְתָּם אִשְׁה לַה׳. וְכָל מְלָאבָה לֹא תַעֲשׁוּ בְּעָצָם הַיוֹם בָּנְה וְנִבְרְתָה מֵעַמֶּיהָ. וְכָל הַנָּפְשׁ אֲשֶׁר כָּל מְלָאכָה בְּעָצָם הַיוֹם הַנָּה וְהַאֲבַרְתִּי אֶת הַנָּפְשׁ הַהוֹא מִקֶּרֶב עַמְהּ. פַּעְשֶׁה בָּל מְלָאכָה בְּעָצֶם הַיוֹם הַנָּה וְהַאֲבַרְתִּי אֶת הַנָּפְשׁ הַהוֹא מִקֶּרֶב עַמְהּ. בָּל מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׁוּ חֻקָּת עוֹלָם לְדרתַיכָם בְּכל מִשְׁבֹתִיכָם. שַׁבַּת שַבְּתוּ הוֹא לָכָם וְעִנִּיתָם אָת נַפְשׁתַיכָם בְּתִשְׁעָה לַחֹרָש בָּעֶרֶב מֵעֶרֶב עַר עָרֶב תִּשְּבְתוּ הֹבּא שַבּתנו. שבּתכם.

Hashem spoke to Moses saying: But on the tenth day of this month it is a Day of Atonement; there shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall afflict yourselves; you shall offer a fire-offering to Hashem. You shall not do any work on this very day, for it is a Day of Atonement to atone for you before Hashem, your God. For any soul who will not be afflicted on this very day will be cut off from its people. And any soul who will do work on this very day, I will destroy that soul from among its people. You shall not do any work; it is an eternal decree throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It is a day of complete rest for you and you shall afflict yourselves, on the ninth of the month in the evening — from evening to evening — shall you rest on your rest day.

☐ The third Torah passage (Numbers 29:7-11) is in parashas Pinchas, in the section that details the mussaf offerings of each festival. As is the case of the other festivals, these verses are read as Maftir on Yom Kippur morning.

ּוּבָעשוֹר לַחֹדֶש הַשְּבִיעִי הַזָּה מִקְרָא לְדֶש יִהְיָה לָכֶם וְעַנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹתֵיכֶם כָּל מְלֶאבֶה לֹא תַעֲשוּ. וְהַקְּרַבְּתָם עֹלָה לַה׳ רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ פַּר בָּן בָּקָר אָחָר אַיִּל אֶחָר בְּעָשׁמְ שְׁה בְּבָּעִים וֹמְנָחִתָם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בַשְּמֶן שְׁל שָׁה בְּבָשִׁים וְמִנְים לַפָּר שְׁנִי עֲשְרנִים לַאֲיִל הָאֶחָר. עַשְׁרוֹן עַשְׁרוֹן לַבְּבֶש הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַבְּּבְשִים. שְׁעִיר עִזִּים אֶחָד חַטָּאת מִלְבַד חַטַּאת הַבְּפָּרִים וְעֹלַת הַמָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָה הַבּּבְּשִים. שְׁעִיר עִזִּים אֶחָד חַטָּאת מִלְבַד חַטַּאת הַבְּפָּרִים וְעֹלַת הַמָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָה וֹנִינִם. וֹנִיבּיהם.

On the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a holy convocation for you and your shall afflict yourselves; you shall do no work. You shall offer an elevation-offering to HASHEM for a satisfying aroma—one young bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year; they shall be unblemished for you. And their meal-offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil—three tenth-ephah for the bull, two tenth-ephah for the one ram. A single tenth-ephah for each lamb of the seven lambs. One

he-goat for a sin-offering; aside from the sin-offering of the atonement and the continual elevation-offering, with its meal-offering; and their libations.

The Ten Days of Repentance

Suspended in Judgment

◆§Three Books are opened on Rosh Hashanah: One for the completely wicked; one for the completely righteous; and one for those between. The completely righteous are immediately inscribed for life; the completely wicked are immediately inscribed for death; those between remain suspended between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. If they prove worthy, they are inscribed for life, if not they are inscribed for death (Rosh Hashanah 16b).

At first glance we may interpret the fate of those between as a sort of suspension of judgment. Since they are neither all good nor all bad, they are given a ten-day chance to clear their records. If they repent, their slate is cleaned and they are given a verdict of life. If not, they are given a verdict of death.

However, a more literal reading of the Talmud dictates a different approach. The words הְלוֹיִם וְעוֹמְרִים, usually rendered "remain suspended," literally mean "hang and stand."

Their verdict is pronounced on Rosh Hashanah and since they are not completely righteous, they are sentenced to death. But since they are not completely wicked, their sentence is postponed until Yom Kippur. It is as if they were made to stand on the gallows, the noose on their necks, suspended in the air — but with a chair under their feet. They "hang and stand."

Should they prove worthy by repenting between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the noose is removed from their neck. Should they not prove worthy, the chair is removed (*Mei'imrei Shlomo*).

A Test of Love and Awe

■ SAlthough the Torah decrees only one fast day, Yom Kippur itself, many righteous people accept additional fasts upon themselves in the days and weeks preceding Yom Kippur. Some even fast every day beginning with the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah (but excluding Rosh Hashanah, Shabbos, and Erev Yom Kippur).

According to *Kisvei HaArizal*: During the Ten Days of Repentance each Jew can discover the extent to which he loves and fears God, for according to the intensity of his love and awe will he be aroused to return to Hashem. A person who epitomizes awe of God will begin fasting even before Rosh Hashanah. Those on a lower plane will begin between Rosh

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after the preparatory stage of eating, constitutes the second stage of the mitzvah of the fast. The Talmud (Beitzah 30a) states that this tosefes, as regards fasting, is a Scripture commandment. Elsewhere (Rosh Hashanah 9a; Yoma 81b) the Talmud derives this obligation from various verses. No fixed amount of time has been assigned to this tosefes; but some time before dusk one is required על הַקְּרָש מְחוֹל עַל הַקְּרָש, to add from the non-sacred to the sacred (Orach Chaim 608:1).

There is a disagreement among the *Rishonim* as to whether the *tosefes* of *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* is Scriptural or Rabbinic; and the same disagreement exists concerning the *tosefes* of *Yom Kippur* with respect to forbidden labor. But, as stated above, with respect to the fast, there is no dispute; all agree that the *tosefes* on Yom Kippur is of Scriptural authority.

בּרְכַּת חַבָּנִים / Blessing of the Children

leaving for the synagogue, after the final Erev Yom Kippur meal. The flow of Divine beneficence and blessing which comes with the onset of this sacred day makes this a particularly auspicious time for such blessings. Both hands should be placed upon the head of the child to signify that the blessing is conveyed with complete generosity of spirit. Each parent may add personal blessings to the customary text (see page 126) as he sees fit (Bais Yaakov).

The Day and Date of Yom Kippur

The Tenth Day of Tishrei

The Midrash (Seder Olam Rabbah 6) gives this chronology (accompanied by the relevant proof verses) of the period between the Receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and the following tenth day of Tishrei:

On the seventh day [of Sivan] after receiving the *Luchos* (Tablets containing the Ten Commandments), Moses ascended the mountain which the cloud had been covering for six days in order to cleanse Moses. He remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. On the fortieth day, which was the seventeenth of Tammuz, he descended, discovered the nation sinning with the Golden Calf, and broke the *Luchos*. He ascended the mountain for the second time on the eighteenth of Tammuz to seek compassion for Israel. He remained there for another period of forty days and forty nights, until, at the end of that period, God was appeased. Then He told Moses to [descend,] hew a second set of Tablets and then ascend Mount Sinai for the third time. Moses did so. He descended on the twenty-eighth of Av and hewed the two Tablets. On the twenty-ninth of Av he ascended and the Torah was

taught to him anew; as it says: So I stood on the mountain as during the first period, forty days and forty nights; and HASHEM listened to me that time also; and HASHEM did not desire to destroy you (Deuteronomy 10:10). From this verse we derive that just as the first forty-day period was favorable, so was the third forty-day period, but the second forty-day period was a time of Divine anger. Moses descended for the third and final time on the tenth of Tishrei, which was to be Yom Kippur, and informed the people that he had found favor before the Omnipresent. Therefore, this day was established as a decree and a remembrance for all generations, as it says: This shall be to you an eternal decree (Leviticus 16:34).

☐ Another Midrash (*Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Zuta* 4) describes Moses' descent from the mountain that Yom Kippur:

During the final forty-day period that Moses ascended Mount Sinai to bring the Torah to his people, Israel declared each day as a day of fasting [they would eat only at night]. But on the eve of the fortieth day they did not break their fast, instead, they continued fasting all through the night — in order that the Evil Inclination not gain the upper hand. The next morning on the tenth of Tishrei, they arose early and stood before Mount Sinai waiting to greet Moses. They cried when they saw Moses, and Moses cried when he saw them. And that crying ascended on high. At that moment, the compassion of the Holy One, Blessed is He, was aroused and the Holy Spirit informed them of good tidings and consolations, "My children, I swear by My great Name that this crying shall be for you a crying of joy; and this day shall be for you a day of forgiveness, atonements and pardon — for you, for your children, for your children, to the end of all generations."

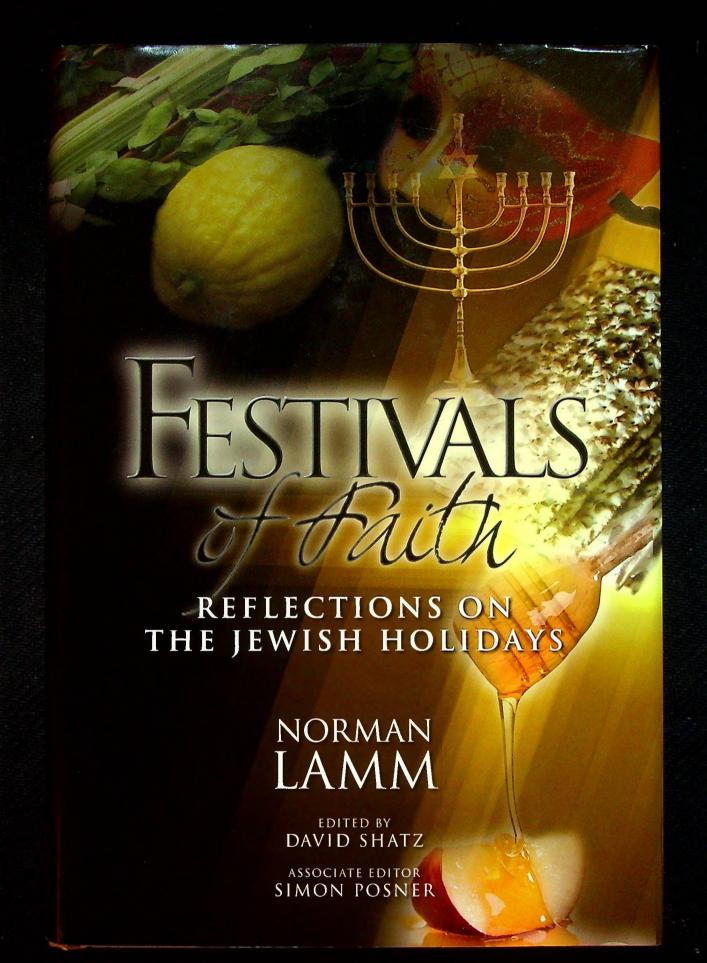
☐ Moreover, when God forgives Israel's sin, He is not sad hearted; rather, He celebrates with great joy, and He says to the mountain and hills, to the springs and the valleys, "Come and celebrate with Me with great joy, for I am about to forgive the sins of Israel" (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah 1).

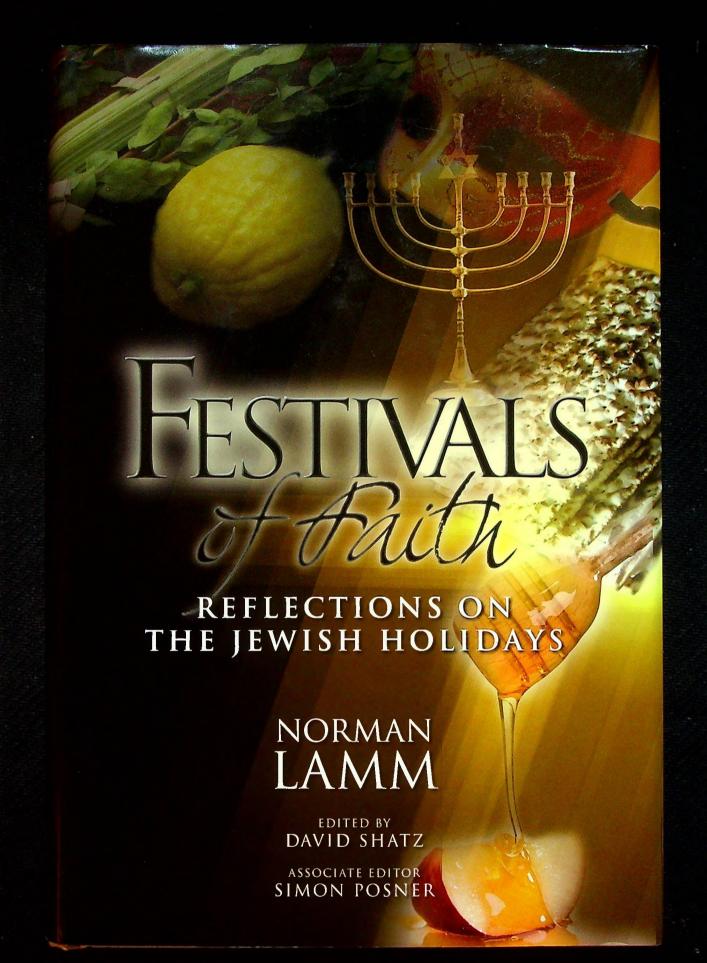
The Day of the Week

לא אַר״וּ ראשוּפּש, Lo adu Rosh, is the concise halachic statement for the principle underlying the formulation of the calendar; namely, Rosh Hashanah may never fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday. [The word אַר״וּ is a combination of the letters א=1; ==4; and ==6, which stand for the first, fourth, and sixth days of the week.] This principle is stated by

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^{1.} On two previous occasions, both associated with the giving of the Torah, the nation was bested by the Evil Inclination. First, on the day they were to receive the Torah, the people should have remained awake in anticipation of the great event. Yet the people not only slept that night, but they overslept. Second, forty days later, when they despaired of Moses' return, they sinned with the Golden Calf.





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Festivals of Faith

Reflections on the Jewish Holidays

by Norman Lamm

Edited by
David Shatz

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HEAR, O FATHER

THE SHEMA, THE MOST celebrated and significant passage in all of Jewish literature, is one that we are required to pronounce twice every day. Yom Kippur is, of course, no exception. Yet those who are observant will have noticed that there is one slight difference between our recital of the Shema during the rest of the year and our reading of it on this holy day. Every other day of the year, we say, Shema Yisra'el Hashem Elokeinu Hashem ehad, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." And then, before the passage beginning Ve-ahavta—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy might," we recite be-lahash, in a soft undertone or whisper, the line Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed, "Blessed be the name of God's glorious kingdom forever and ever." On Yom Kippur, however, we do not confine ourselves to whispering the line Barukh shem kevod. Instead, we recite it be-kol ram, in a loud voice: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever."

Why this difference? Why on Yom Kippur do we give such loud and clear expression to a sentence which we otherwise whisper in the most subdued tones?

The answer I propose to you today is, I believe, one that has a real, relevant, and terribly important message for each of us. It goes back to the two sources of the *Shema* in the Jewish tradition.

The first source of the *Shema* is well known to us. It occurs in the Bible, and consists of the words spoken by Moses to his people, Israel, in one of his very last discourses with them. Hear, my people Israel, he tells them, there is only one God in the world. And he then immediately proceeds to tell them, *Veahavta*, you shall love this God with all your heart and soul and might. Moses did not mention the words *Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*. They are not at all recorded in the Bible.

The second source is in the aggadic tradition of our people, and here the Shema is presented in a completely different setting. Our Sages relate a most interesting and moving scene (see Pesahim 56a and Midrash Aggadah [Buber ed.] Devarim 6). The Patriarch Jacob, whose name is also Israel, is on his deathbed. His twelve sons surround him, ready to bid farewell to their aged father as he is about to depart from this earth. It is a tender scene—but a disturbing one. For Jacob, or Israel, is not dying peacefully. He is tossing and turning restlessly. His face seems troubled, distraught. There is something on his mind that will not let him rest, that will not let him go down peacefully into his grave. "What troubles you, father?" the children ask. "What is it that causes you all this mental pain and anguish?" Jacob's answer is straightforward. "My grandfather Abraham died leaving a good son—Isaac; but he also left a son by the name of Ishmael, who was a disgrace to him, a blot on his name. My father Isaac had two sons. I have followed in his ways; but he also left a son Esau, whose whole career did violence to all our father stood for and lived for. Now that I am about to die, I am worried—shema yesh pesul be-mittati. Perhaps I too am leaving a child who will rebel against God, who will offend all I have lived and died for." When the twelve sons of Jacob, called Israel, heard what was troubling their father on his deathbed, they answered as in one voice and cried out, "Shema Yisra'el-hear, O Father Israel, Hashem Elokeinu Hashem ehad, the Lord you have served all your life, He is our God; the tradition you inherited and bequeathed to us is the one we shall live by and hand over to our children; we shall never leave your ways or abandon the Lord God in whose service you reared us, for the Lord is One!" When Israel—Jacob—heard this affirmation of his faith by all his children, when he realized that he would leave no pesul be-mitato, no unworthy issue behind him, that he would be able to die in peace and in serenity, he called out in deep gratitude: Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever."

This, then, is the second source of the *Shema*. And it is this source of the *Shema* where we do find mention of the passage *Barukh shem kevod*.

What is the difference between these two versions of the origin of *Shema Yisra'el*? The *Shema* of Moses is a command to a nation; that of Jacob's children is a promise to a father. Moses' *Shema* is a theological proposition; that of Jacob's sons is a personal commitment. The first *Shema* is a declaration of ideology; the second is that which cements and unites a family. Moses recognized only one father—the Father in Heaven. Jacob's sons realized that the sense of

duty toward the Heavenly Father came from a sense of obligation and love for their earthly father, Israel. While the *Shema* of Moses is intellectual, a structure of the mind, that of Jacob's sons is emotional and sentimental, stirring them to the very core of their being. In the *Shema* of Moses, the emphasis is on *Hashem ehad*, the Lord is One; in the *Shema* of the children of Father Israel, the stress is placed upon *Hashem Elokeinu*, the Lord is our God—the tradition will be continued, my father's faith will not die with him. Moses' *Shema* does not require a response; that of Jacob's children intuitively evokes the joyous, even rapturous reaction of "thank God"—*Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*.

All year long we pronounce the verse Barukh shem kevod softly, only be-lahash, in a whisper. During the year, it is the Shema of Moses that predominates, the Shema of the intellect, the ideological Shema which does not evoke any response of Barukh shem kevod. But on Yom Kippur, we abandon the Shema of Moses in favor of that of the sons of Israel. On the holiest day of the year, we are not satisfied with intellectual abstractions, with theological formulations. Today we rise and with full voice, be-kol ram, we proclaim for all the world to hear: "Shema Yisra'el, Hear father, hear mother, wherever you may be today, Hashem Elokeinu, your God is my God. No matter that sometimes I seem to have strayed from the path onto which you guided me, that I often seem to have abandoned your heritage and forsaken your faith and neglected the richness and beauty of the Jewish tradition you passed on to me—today I promise you, father, that Hashem Elokeinu, your faith is my faith, your tradition is my tradition, your God is my God, your Torah is my Torah." Hashem ehad—this is the one Torah for which generations have lived and even given their lives, the One God whose overriding claim on our loyalties has been acknowledged by Jews throughout the ages. On Yom Kippur we return to our Father in Heaven via our fathers whom we respected and our mothers whom we loved on earth. This day our *Shema* must be more than a profession of faith; it must become a confession of fidelity, a declaration of loyalty. Kol Nidre may effectively release us from all personal vows and annul all oaths; but there is one promise, one commitment, too great and too deep, too terrible and too magnificent ever to be abrogated. It is the oath of Shema Yisra'el—Father, hear me now: your Lord is my God, the One God.

On this holy day, as we recall the memory of revered fathers and sweet, beloved mothers, it seems to me as if they and their parents, and all the generations who labored to bring us forth, stand breathlessly awaiting our move. I can see agony written across their foreheads and the pain of suspense in

their eyes: shema yesh pesul be-mittati. Perhaps my children will forget me, my spirit, all I lived for and lived with. Perhaps in that strange new world called the space age they will ignore their responsibility to time, to their Jewish past and future; they will cut all ties to us and our Torah and tradition in favor of the glittering superficialities of their world. Perhaps their indifference to Torah will reflect disgrace and shame upon me. At this time, it becomes the duty of each of us to reassure them, so to speak, to make a promise to the past that we shall not forsake the future. We must say Shema Yisra'el not only as Moses said it, but with the intimacy, the personal fervor, the love and undying affection that Israel's children said it to him. What greater Yizkor can there be: What greater memorial can anyone erect for his parents than to declare to them that there is something imperishable that has survived them in us! When we can say *Shema* in that way, with that deep love and emotion, then all our past arises as one to respond to our words: Barukh shem kevod malkhuto, blessed be the name of God's glorious kingdom, not only for one year or one decade or one generation, but le-olam va-ed, forever and ever; for if such is the depth of a son's and daughter's loyalty, then the future of Torah, of Judaism, is assured. Thank God!

And then, when we have read the Shema in that way and proclaimed be-kol ram, in loud and clear tones, the Barukh shem kevod, our confidence that our oath to the past has been acknowledged, that our debt to parents and grand-parents, to Jewish history itself, is accepted, then we can pass safely on to the next level: Ve-ahavta et Hashem Elokekha, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Then all our lives become suffused with a new meaning, a deeper purpose, a more elevated love and warmth that transforms us completely. For to say the Shema in this way is more than to agree that there is only one God. It is to change our whole way of life, to live more fully and more meaningfully to have the ennobling spirit of Torah penetrate every level of our existence. No man who has lived the Shema of the sons of Jacob can ever retain only half-hearted loyalty to Judaism. The Shema of Yom Kippur means that your loyalty to God Almighty and your love of all that is Jewish is so strong that even Heaven itself cannot shake you in your convictions!

Just recently, I read of a prayer uttered by a Jew in the Middle Ages, recorded in the book called *Shevet Yehudah*. In English it reads something like this: "Master of all the worlds! I see that You are trying so hard to get me to abandon my faith. You bring upon me persecutions and trials and suffering and hatred, all to force me to give up being a Jew! So I want You to know, *Gottenyu*, that

despite all You and Your heavenly hosts will say or do, I am a Jew and a Jew shall I remain, and nothing You can do will make me change my mind." There you have the kind of love and loyalty and magnificent pride in Jewishness that comes from the Yom Kippur Shema, from the awareness that Judaism is more than a set of beliefs, but a commitment to all the past and a pledge to all the future, the knowledge that if I break the continuity, then I have been treacherous to my forebears and deserted my descendants. That is why the Shema has always been the last words on the lips of Jewish martyrs—it was not so much the Shema of Moses as the Shema of the sons of Jacob, not so much the everyday Shema as the Yom Kippur Shema. When the Jew stood ready to offer his very life for God and Torah, all the generations of the past received him with open arms and with the triumphant welcome: Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed.

My dear friends, we have a greater and more difficult task than dying for Torah. Our task is living for Torah. On Yom Kippur, in these sacred precincts of the synagogue, as we are about to invoke the memory of beloved parents and grandparents, we pledge ourselves anew to their great ideals. We shall not become the instruments, passive or otherwise, whereby Judaism will be dissolved. We shall not stand by idly while mitzvah after mitzvah is abandoned. We shall not close our eyes while year after year we see ourselves slipping from the firm kind of faith which alone can guarantee meaning in our lives. There is a love that strains to burst forth from our breasts, a powerful love that encompasses God and man, Torah and Israel, family and friend and stranger alike. With this love, this ve-ahavta, we face the past in order to be able to face the future with confidence. If we cannot in good conscience say our Shema as did Jacob's sons, if we cannot say it so that the response of Barukh shem kevod comes be-kol ram, then our Yizkor is meaningless. Then we have perhaps remembered, but we have failed to remind God; and, after all, we pray Yizkor Elokim, that God remember our dear ones.

The golden chain of the Jewish tradition is dangling before our eyes. The last link was placed upon it by our parents. It is swinging back and forth—the whole Jewish past waiting for you to grasp it, add on your own golden link, and then pass the chain on to your children. If you let it swing past you, you may never again have a chance to hold it, and you will have failed both your past and your future, your parents and your children. If you grasp it—then you will yourself be the newest link, the newest addition to the sacred tradition.

Grasp it. Never let it go. Ve-ahavta et Hashem Elokekha be-khol levavekha u-ve-khol nafshekha u-ve-khol me'odekha (Deut. 6:5). And when you have it, ve-shinnantam le-banekha (Deut. 6:7), pass it down to your own children and grandchildren, so that all generations can proclaim: Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed, Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.

THE WAY OF HONOR

Yom Kippur is one of the strangest, most fascinating days of the Jewish calendar. It is a great paradox, composed of two contradictory moods. On the one hand it is yom tzom—a fast-day, solemn and somber. On the other hand it is yom tov—a festival, happy and joyous. On the one hand it is the great and awful Yom ha-Din, the day in which judgment is handed down on individuals, on nations, and on the entire world, a day symbolized by the kittel, reminiscent of the shroud which marks the inevitable end of arrogant, mortal man. On the other hand, it is a day when we affirm life, proclaiming zakhrenu le-hayyim, "remember us unto life," when we recite the blessing she-heheyanu ve-higgi'anu la-zeman ha-zeh, a blessing reserved for only the happiest occasions. It is Yom Kippurim, when we ask forgiveness for our overwhelming, crushing guilt; and, as some commentaries put it, Yom ke-Purim—a day as joyous and heartwarming as Purim!

All through this day which we now commence, you will find this clash of opposing moods, of conflicting themes. After our confession we recite two passages that reflect this paradox. First we shall say Elokai, ad she-lo notzarti eini kedai—"Oh, my God, before I was born I was unworthy; now that I am born, it is as if I were yet unborn." We emphasize the worthlessness of man's life, the vanity of his foolish illusions. Yet right afterward we begin another prayer, the first word of which is also Elokai—"Oh, my God." We say Elokai, netzor leshoni me-ra... petah libbi be-Toratekha u-be-mitzvotekha tirdof nafshi—Oh, my God, teach me to be big enough to be silent when I am smeared by small men, when petty people aim their shafts at me. Give me a sterling character. Open my heart to the glories of Thy Torah, and let me behold the majesty of Thy mitzvot so that I might pursue them. What a difference! In one prayer we come to Elokai because we are nothing, in the other because we can become something. In one, because we are worthless, in the other because we can yet be worthy. In one, because life is just awful, in the other because God is awesome. In one we



THE SABBATH OF GREATNESS

Many reasons have been offered as to why this Sabbath before the holiday of Passover is known by the name Shabbat ha-Gadol. Allow me to commend to your attention one such reason, which I find particularly significant. The author of the Tur, one of the greatest legal codes of Judaism, maintains that our Sabbath is known as Shabbat ha-Gadol left she-na'aseh bo nes gadol—because a great miracle was performed on this day (Tur, Orah Hayyim 430). It was on this day of the year that the Jews were liberated from Egypt, that they summoned up the courage to take the lambs that were tied to their doorposts and slaughter them as sacrifices to Almighty God. This act outraged the Egyptians, for whom the lamb was a divinity. They were stunned by the effrontery of these miserable Hebrew slaves who dared, in the presence of their masters, to exert their own religious independence. And yet, ve-lo hayu rasha'in lomar lahem davar, the Egyptians could not and did not say a word in an attempt to stop the Israelites. Because of this nes gadol, this great miracle, the Sabbath was called Shabbat ha-Gadol, the great Sabbath.

This is, indeed, a beautiful explanation. But there is something troubling about it. Granted that the silence of the Egyptians, their sudden paralysis, was a true miracle. But what makes this a "great" miracle? Why gadol? This was an era which saw the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt, the ten plagues, and the splitting of the Red Sea. Were these miracles not at least equally great? How does one measure the size or significance of miracles?

I believe the answer can be most instructive. For *nes gadol* refers not to the silence of the Egyptians, but to the miracle of Jewish character. What we celebrate is not a great miracle, but the miracle of greatness. And I refer not only to the courageous defiance exercised by the Jews in Egypt, but to an even more

This *derashah* is based upon a theme suggested by Rabbi Joseph M. Baumol.—N. L.

significant fact. The other miracles of which we read and which we celebrate allowed the Israelites to escape and survive, but in the process the Egyptian enemy was hurt, injured, or killed. The plagues caused a great deal of pain for the Egyptians, and the splitting of the Red Sea was followed by the drowning of the hordes of Pharaoh. This miracle, however, involved no injury to the enemy. The Jews grew and rose in stature, but no one was hurt. It was not the kind of bravado or courage that is expressed in doing violence to one's neighbor. Shabbat ha-Gadol celebrates nes gadol, the magic and the miracle of genuine greatness achieved by our people. This was real gadlut: greatness from within, not at someone else's expense.

The story is told of the great saint and sage R. Israel Salanter was walking in the street one day and encountered two boys who had been fighting with each other. The stronger had thrown the weaker into a ditch at the side of the road. "What is going on?" asked the rabbi. The stronger boy answered, "We had an argument as to which of us is taller. So I threw him into a ditch to prove to him that I am taller than he." "Foolish boy," replied the rabbi, "could you not have achieved the same purpose by standing on a chair rather than throwing him into a ditch?"

What the rabbi was teaching was a secret of true greatness. *Gadlut* consists of achieving eminence without crushing another human being.

And oh, how rare is that quality of nes gadol, the miracle of greatness. Everyone wants to be great, and so few know the Jewish secret of greatness. The big powers all want to appear great and acceptable in the eyes of the uncommitted bloc of Afro-Asian nations. It is a national policy of our government to try to gain in popularity amongst the new nations. It is not for us here to decide the validity of this principle. But I know that many Americans were saddened when Adlai Stevenson, the American ambassador to the U.N., this past week chastised the State of Israel for defending itself against Syrian attacks. He seems to be afflicted with what has become a traditional liberal blindness—the inability or unwillingness to discriminate between the hooligan's attack and the victim's defense. It is of one piece with a popular liberal attitude that expends much more energy and sentiment in defending the murderer from punishment than in preventing the victim from having suffered in the first place. We were saddened and disappointed when Ambassador Stevenson—who, according to the British press, acted without authorization of and to the chagrin of the State Department—attempted to act big in the eyes of the Arabs and their friends by reproaching the loneliest of all

nations. No eloquence and no humor can disguise the *katnut*, the smallness of spirit, of a man who, rather than stand on a chair, will throw Israel into a diplomatic ditch.

And the same lesson holds true for all of us. It is true for the State of Israel, which also often finds that it suffers from overpoliticization, with the partisanship of its political parties often exceeding all bounds. Political consciousness of the citizenry is good, but when each individual party—and this holds true for all of them—tries to gain in prestige and power at the expense of all others, by belittling and scandalizing others, then the State itself begins to suffer.

It holds true for American Jewish organizations, where the progress of American Jewry is all too often stifled because of the unwillingness of the various organizations to unify or at least cooperate, not so much to protect their own autonomy as to make sure that the other organizations do not receive credit and power.

As individuals, Shabbat ha-Gadol reminds us that the way to greatness in business should never come by crushing competitors. In our professions we should not attempt to achieve prestige by hurting colleagues. The concept of nes gadol teaches each of us not only how to act, but also how to think; in our innermost hearts, we should measure our own success or failure not relative to our neighbors, but by absolute standards. We must, each of us, attempt to grow great by ourselves, not only by comparison to the smallness of others.

But granted the negative aspect of this definition of *gadlut* or greatness, that it must not come at the expense of others, what is the positive or affirmative definition? What do we mean when we say that one must grow big by himself and through himself?

Perhaps the Talmud can help us here. In discussing the laws of *metzi'ah*, or finds, talmudic law is that if one finds an object which has no distinguishing marks and is unclaimed, he may keep it. If he is a child, a *katan*, the *metzi'ah* belongs to his father or guardian. If he is a *gadol*, an adult, then it belongs to himself. And yet, the Talmud maintains, *Lo katan katan mammash ve-lo gadol gadol mammash* (*Bava Metzi'a* 12b)—whereas "child" and "adult" normally refer to chronology or physical development, that is, before or after the age of thirteen, that does not hold true in this context. *Katan* or *ketannim* with regard to finds is not a question of age, but a question of independence. A minor, or *katan*, is one *ha-somekh al shulhan aviv o shulhan shel aherim*—who literally relies or leans on the table of his father or on the table of others. A *gadol*, or adult, is one who has his own table, who supports himself.

I believe this is more than an economic definition in Jewish financial law. It is a lesson for all of life. To be *gadol*, great, means to be yourself, to draw upon your own spiritual resources, to live true to your own destiny and character. A spiritual *katan* will beg for crumbs from the tables of others; one who has achieved *gadlut* will repair to his own table, no matter how sparse the food may be.

In Egypt, throughout their servitude, our ancestors were in the category of those who "rely on the table of others." They had assimilated Egyptian life and values, Egyptian culture and religion. They had sunk to spiritual minority, or katnut, and this kind of katnut cannot be redeemed or healed by plagues or the splitting of seas or political independence. What was needed was nothing less than a miracle—the nes gadol, the miracle of genuine greatness by an act which affirms the spiritual self, a rallying to unique Jewish destiny and image and character, a courageous cutting of the cultural umbilical cord which tied the Jewish victims to their Egyptian persecutors. This was achieved through shehitat eloheihem, through the slaughtering of the Egyptians' gods and the rejection of their idolatry, which until that time had been accepted by the Israelites. This was the miracle of Jewish greatness. No one else was hurt, and it was an act of spiritual independence.

This is a teaching which holds true universally. He who lives by leave of another, he who satisfies his cultural hunger by crumbs from strange tables, he who seeks esteem by alien standards—he is a katan. The abject conformist, the servile status-seeker, the eternal mah yafisnik—these are ketannim in long trousers. Jews whose lifelong ambition it is to imitate non-Jews, Jewish movements and doctrines which pine for crumbs from the tables of secularism or Unitarianism, from Deweyism or Marxism—and there are such movements here and overseas—are minors with big vocabularies. Those who are willing to settle for Jewish statehood, but are ready to abandon all attempts at the greater aspiration for Jewish selfhood, they suffer from stunted spiritual growth.

The first promise that God gave to the first Jew, Abraham, was Ve-e'eskha le-goy gadol, "And I shall make you into a great nation" (Gen. 12:2). God did not mean goy gadol insofar as numbers or power is concerned; we Jews have never had much of either. He meant a nation of genuine greatness. And that is why later, when God tells Abraham of the future bitter exile of his descendants in Egypt, He gives him the greatest consolation: Ve-aharei khen yetze'u bi-rekhush gadol (Gen 15:14). This is usually translated, "And afterwards they will leave with great wealth." I believe the real translation is, "And afterwards they will

leave with a wealth of greatness." Great wealth is an ordinary ambition; a wealth of greatness is the extraordinary Jewish aspiration.

Our haftarah for today concludes with a promise by the Almighty: Hinneh anokhi sholeah lakhem et Eliyyah ha-navi lifnei bo yom Hashem ha-gadol ve-hanora, "Behold, I shall send to you the prophet Elijah before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 3:23). We have a choice: gadol or nora, great or terrible. We live in a world where decisions must be made. We live in a world where Elijah calls out to us as he did to the Jews gathered about him at Mount Carmel, saying, "How long will you waver?"

In our world, there can be no wavering and no indecisiveness. It is either/or: either be Jewish and great, or cringe at the tables of others and nora, terrible. The world we live in will not permit leisurely smallness. Judaism cannot survive with pettiness of the spirit and the immaturity of Jewish mindlessness. If we return to Torah and tradition, we can ourselves forge the nes of gadol. If, Heaven forbid, we do not, we must face and expect the terrible failure of katnut.

On Shabbat ha-Gadol, we strive for the experience of *yom Hashem hagadol*, and by once again becoming a *goy gadol*, we will be able to bequeath to our children and children's children a *rekhush gadol*, a heritage of authentic greatness.

Ve-heshiv lev avot al banim, ve-lev banim al avotam—"And the Lord shall cause the heart of the fathers to return to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their father" (Mal. 3:24).